

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 4957 extends the legislative authority for the Black Patriots Foundation for another 5 years, to 2005, in order to establish a commemorative work on the Washington, D.C. mall. This commemorative work honors the black patriots who fought for American independence during the Revolutionary War.

In 1998, the Black Patriots Foundation was granted an extension for the authority to design and construct the memorial on the Washington D.C. Mall. When granted, the Black Patriots Foundation believed that the memorial would be finalized in just 2 years. Unfortunately, the foundation has not been successful in raising enough funds and has asked that it be granted an extension 5 more years until 2005.

Mr. Speaker, the Black Patriots Foundation has recently hired an exclusive director with extensive fundraising experience and has recommitted themselves to seeing this memorial to completion. Therefore, I believe it is the best course of action to reauthorize this foundation so that this very important part of our history can be experienced by all of those who will visit this deserving memorial.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Utah (Mr. HANSEN), my good friend, the chairman of the Subcommittee on National Parks and Public Lands for his management of this legislation. I want to personally commend the chief author of the sponsor of this legislation, the gentleman from New York, (Mr. RANGEL), my good friend.

Mr. Speaker, the 99th Congress approved legislation reauthorizing the Black Revolutionary War Patriots Foundation to establish a memorial on Federal land in Washington, D.C. The specific purpose of the proposed memorial is to honor the roughly 5,000 slaves and free men who fought against Britain during the American Revolution, although its broader theme is to honor all African Americans who have fought and died while serving in the U.S. military.

Mr. Speaker, the proposed site for the memorial is north of the Reflecting Pool on the Mall, between the Washington and Lincoln Memorials, an area where more than 100,000 people once gathered in that summer of 1963 to hear Dr. Martin Luther King's historic speech, "I have a Dream."

Mr. Speaker, from the outset, the project has complied with all aspects of Commemorative Works Act and has received all the approvals necessary to move forward. Unfortunately, the private efforts to raise an estimated \$9

million needed for the construction of the memorial have yet to reach their goal, and without congressional action, authorization for the project will expire this month.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 4957, as I said earlier, which was sponsored by the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL), my good friend, will amend the existing law to extend an authorization for the foundation until the year 2005. While previous extensions have been for 2 years only, it is our hope that this 5-year extension will provide sufficient time for this project to raise the funds necessary to move this project forward.

Again, I urge my colleagues to approve this legislation; and I urge my friends to support this bill.

Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4957, legislation to extend the authority of the Black Patriots Foundation to establish a commemorative work on the national Mall.

I am delighted to be an original cosponsor of this legislation along with Mr. RANGEL, Mrs. JOHNSON and Mr. PAYNE, all of whom have worked so long and hard—and continue to do so—to make this memorial to the Black patriots of the Revolutionary War a reality.

My colleagues, this House has noticed an absence and therefore a very real need for commemoration in honor of people who helped to birth this Nation, people who actually gave the supreme sacrifice during this Nation's defining moment.

As Harriett Beecher Stowe wrote about the black men and women who served in the Revolutionary War, it was not for their own land they fought, nor even for the land which had adopted them, but for a land that had enslaved them and whose laws, even in freedom, more often oppressed than protected. Bravery under such circumstances has a peculiar beauty and merit.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, men and women of all colors have been involved in every aspect of this country from its founding days. We are full partners in the history, bloodshed and tears that have made this Nation great.

Unfortunately, not all of us know our Nation's history, where we came from and what makes us who we are today. H.R. 4957 and the work of the Black Revolutionary War Patriots Foundation will move us closer to that goal and to a lasting historical recognition on our national Mall of these brave men and women who fought for our freedoms. I am pleased to support this effort and encourage my colleagues to give this bill their strong support.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 4957, the Black Patriots Foundation Extension, which would extend by five years, until 2005, the authority of the Black Revolutionary War Patriots Foundation to complete a memorial to the black men, women, and children who fought in the Revolutionary War.

It is fitting that the Black Patriots Foundation was created and charged with the responsibility of constructing a memorial on the National Mall to honor the approximately 5,000 known African Americans who fought for America's freedom during the Revolutionary War. Unfortunately, their important work will not have been completed by the expiration of the authority of the initiating legislation. There-

fore, it is important that H.R. 4957 be passed by the 106th Congress and signed into law by the president because the original 1986 legislation will expire in October 2000.

Most American school children learn of the bravery of, Crispus Attucks, the first African American man to die in the cause of this country's independence. However, very few school age children or adults in this country know any other names of stories of the thousands of African Americans who fought for this nation's independence at a time when they themselves were slaves. It is reported that many African American soldiers in the Revolutionary Army did not enlist, but were offered for service by their masters so that they themselves would not be required to serve in the cause for their nation's freedom. During the War for Independence if a man was drafted, he was allowed to buy his way out of the army or to send someone in his place, a mercenary. For the wealthy property owner, the cheapest mercenary available to them was a slave.

By the time the first battles of the war occurred at Lexington and Concord, there were ten African American soldiers. One of these brave Americans was named Prince Easterbrooks, who was said to be "the first to get into the fight." Later at the battle of Bunker Hill, Salem Poor, another African American soldier acted with such valor, fourteen officers who observed his actions in battle wrote to the legislature requesting special recognition of Poor for his heroism.

At first Washington was hesitant about enlisting blacks. But when he heard they had fought well at Bunker Hill, he changed his mind. This allowed the creation of the first all-black First Rhode Island Regiment composed of 33 freedmen and 92 slaves who were promised freedom if they served until the end of the war—distinguished itself in the Battle of Newport. Later, most were killed during a British attack.

The heroic actions of African American free citizens and slaves during the American Revolutionary War extend beyond the battlefield. Such is the case of an unnamed African American spy who was a servant to the leader of the British Army, General Cornwallis. This patriot spy provided valuable information to General Marquis de Lafayette, who offered his services to the American Revolutionary Congress and fought with General George Washington at the Battle of Brandywine and at Valley Forge.

In the name of this American Revolutionary spy and the thousands of other unknown African American free persons and slaves who fought during our nation's war for freedom I urge my colleagues to support the passage of this legislation.

Mr. HANSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Utah (Mr. HANSEN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4957.

The question was taken.

Mr. HANSEN. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further